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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5893
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0236
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4510
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3805
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7331
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4883
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 1086
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 1101
RUDKIA/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 0931
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3092
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0733

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 000305

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STATE FOR EAP/MLS; PACOM FOR FPA

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMESE REGIME CONTINUES TO HARASS ACTIVISTS

REF: A. RANGOON 248

[1](#)B. RANGOON 211

[1](#)C. RANGOON 185

Classified By: Poloff Dean Tidwell for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The regime continues to detain and harass pro-democracy activists. Authorities arrested activist Htin Kyaw for the fourth time in four weeks. They unsuccessfully tried to prevent Min Ko Naing from visiting the family of a political prisoner. They detained two activists in Bago Division for distributing the U.N. Declaration on Human Rights. The pro-regime USDA appears to be acting as enforcers, not the police. The activists remain defiant and vow to continue their protests. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) On March 22, authorities arrested Htin Kyaw, one of the demonstrators arrested following the February 22 public protest in Rangoon (reftels) after he staged a solo protest in a crowded Rangoon market. Htin Kyaw was protesting the regime's pressure on a local Buddhist monastery to prevent Htin Kyaw from being ordained as a monk. He claimed in his public protest that this violated his religious rights. This was the fourth time authorities detained him in four weeks. He was subsequently released.

[1](#)3. (C) On March 18, an 88 Generation Students group led by political activist Min Ko Naing visited the family of Myo Min Zaw, a political prisoner serving a long sentence in Putao Prison. After local authorities in Bahan Township, Rangoon Division, learned of the planned visit, they ordered pro-regime groups to block their way and ordered neighbors to condemn the activists when they arrived. Their efforts backfired when the neighbors came out and cheered the visitors, while the authorities and their Union Solidarity Development Association (USDA) supporters fled.

[1](#)4. (C) Guards and officials at the Shwedagon Pagoda prevented Htun Htun from worshipping on March 19 because his T-shirt bore a picture of national hero General Aung San. He protested that it was not illegal to honor Aung San, but the

authorities refused him access to the pagoda.

¶15. (C) On March 20, authorities in Pyay, Bago Division, detained two activists from the Human Rights Defender and Promoter group for distributing 200 copies of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The authorities released them, after warning them not to distribute any more pamphlets.

¶16. (C) COMMENT: Regime authorities continue to harass, detain, and arrest pro-democracy activists, but have failed to discourage them. Individual Burmese show increased willingness to publicly protests and defy threats (reftels). In response, the regime has relied more often on its goon squads of USDA members and newly formed "People's Militia" to intimidate activists. Traditional law enforcement officers have been marginalized. We have heard the military and police rank and file are uncomfortable with the more active USDA role. We will continue to monitor how these tensions evolve. END COMMENT.
VILLAROSA